



## JÓZEF SOSNOWSKI

Eighth day of the proceedings.

**Presiding Judge:** Next witness, please: Józef Sosnowski.

I advise the witness as per Art. 107 of the Code of Criminal Procedure that he is obliged to speak the truth. False testimony is punishable by incarceration for up to five years. Do the parties offer any motions regarding the manner of questioning?

**Prosecution:** We do not require the witness to swear an oath.

**Defense:** Nor do we.

**Witness:** Józef Sosnowski, 42 years old, expert construction worker; religion: Roman Catholic; no relation to the defendants.

**Presiding Judge:** When was the witness put in the camp?

**Witness:** On 6 July 1940 and I remained there until 23 October 1944.

**Presiding Judge:** In which *kommandos* did the witness work during his time in the camp?

**Witness:** In the equipment installation *kommando* in the *Bauleitung* [construction department].

**Presiding Judge:** Was the witness free to move around the camp?

**Witness:** I was free to move around the entire camp, even to enter the houses of the SS men.

**Presiding Judge:** Due to his freedom of movement, the witness knew some of the defendants. Please point out which ones.

**Witness:** Aumeier, Grabner, Müller, Plagge, Szczurek, Schumacher, Gehring.

**Presiding Judge:** Regarding the defendants named by the witness: what specifics can the witness give in relation to their behavior in the camp and their handling of the prisoners?



**Witness:** I shall tell what I have seen and what I have experienced myself.

**Presiding Judge:** Regarding Aumeier.

**Witness:** I met Aumeier in 1942, in March. I worked in the kitchen at the time. A transport arrived, escorted with machine guns. The arrivals were put in holes in the ground. I saw Aumeier jump into a hole and start shooting his pistol.

Aumeier punished me with three months in the SK [*Strafkompanie*, penal company]. Between 12 March and 15 June of 1942 I worked in the *Königsgrube* ["Royal Ditch"], regulating the flow of a river. There was a prisoner escape at the time and we were put back into the Birkenau camp. After Aumeier arrived, and Grabner as well, after they arrived at the block, the best citizens of Kraków, the professors, were picked out and 20 of them were shot on the spot. The rest were tied with wires and brought to the gas chamber. I did not see if they went to be gassed, but I did see them tied with wires.

**Presiding Judge:** Was the witness in the *Sonderkommando* [special squad]?

**Witness:** Yes, I was in the penal company. First at block 11, then we were moved to Birkenau.

**Presiding Judge:** Was the witness ever able to see Gehring?

**Witness:** Yes, I saw him in block 11 several times, and I saw him abuse a Jew once, torturing him in the yard so brutally that we found him dead in the washroom in the morning.

**Presiding Judge:** How did he abuse him?

**Witness:** He beat him, kicked him, ordered him to run around, to hop around. As for defendant Grabner, when he arrived in the camp on 6 July 1942, alongside defendant Plagge he gave every prisoner 25 lashes with a whip. What is more, one prisoner escaped and we had to stand for a standing punishment all night. In October 1940, on a Sunday, Grabner came to the camp grounds and picked more than a dozen prisoners on a whim. What happened to them, nobody knows, but they never came back. Defendant Grabner was also present for the selections in 1942. As for defendant Müller, when I was working in the installation *kommando*, my superior sent me to Hößler to fix a pump. After the work was done I asked Müller if I should leave and he beat me, kicked me, and had me run some two kilometers downhill and uphill.



Working at the potatoes on a Sunday, I met defendant Schumacher. Like Gehring, he would beat and kick prisoners. He had one Jewish prisoner run, then he shot him. He hit me so hard for not taking off my cap that I lost a tooth.

Szczurek, a *Blockführer* [block leader] in 1941, sicked a dog on me when I was at the *Bauhof* [construction depot] and the dog bit me.

**Presiding Judge:** Please take another look at the defendants.

**Witness:** I also know the camp doctor, Krammer. When working on block 10, I saw him going to block 20, and after he left, four dead men were there. Whether or not he gave them injections, I do not know, in any case they died. It was in October of 1943. However, the defendant's face has changed so much I could not recognize him. I cannot say anything else specific about the defendant.

**Presiding Judge:** Are there questions for the witness?

**Prosecutor Pęchalski:** The witness has testified that 20 people from the Birkenau penal company were shot. Where did it happen, in block 11 or in Birkenau?

**Witness:** In Birkenau, between blocks 1 and 2.

**Prosecutor Pęchalski:** The witness has testified that Grabner, Aumeier, Palitzsch, and others were present there. Did the shooting take place on the spot, immediately after they arrived?

**Witness:** Right after they arrived. Aumeier picked out the healthiest men, set them aside and they were shot right away.

**Prosecutor Pęchalski:** So Grabner and Aumeier were there. What were the reasons for the shooting?

**Witness:** An escape that had taken place on that day.

**Prosecutor Pęchalski:** Had a few hours passed between the escape and the shooting?

**Witness:** Yes, just a couple of hours.

**Prosecutor Pęchalski:** The witness has said defendant Gehring abused a Jew with "sports".



**Witness:** I do not know exactly how he did that.

**Prosecutor Brandys:** Is the witness aware that defendant Aumeier supposedly beat up sick people in the hospital block?

**Witness:** I do not know that.

**Prosecutor Brandys:** The witness has named Götze. Where was he employed?

**Witness:** He was employed at Birkenau. While working on the water works I saw him abuse a woman, but I do not know her nationality. I was 40 meters away.

**Prosecutor Brandys:** Did the witness see Gehring beat up women?

**Witness:** I didn't see that.

**Presiding Judge:** Are there any questions for the witness?

**Defense Attorney Kruh:** I noticed that the witness, while looking at the defendants, named Gehring while pointing at defendant Götze. Was there no mix-up here and did you actually mean Gehring?

**Witness:** I say I definitely meant Gehring.

**Defense Attorney Kossek:** In what year did you see defendant Götze beat up women in Birkenau?

**Witness:** I saw him, it was in October or September of 1942.

**Defense Attorney Kossek:** Is the witness aware that there was another Götze?

**Witness:** I do not know that.

**Defense Attorney Minasowicz:** The witness has said that in March of 1943 people in a transport surrounded by machine guns were shot. How many of them were there?

**Witness:** Some 40 people.

**Defense Attorney Minasowicz:** Where did that take place?



**Witness:** Near the *Blockführerstube* [guardhouse], at the gravel pit.

**Defense Attorney Minasowicz:** Where did the witness observe this from?

**Witness:** From the kitchen near the pit.

**Defense Attorney Minasowicz:** Could you see what happened deep down in the pit from the kitchen?

**Witness:** No.

**Defense Attorney Minasowicz:** So why did the witness claim that the defendant [Aumeier] killed people after jumping into the hole?

**Witness:** Because I could hear gunshots and I saw him run out with his pistol and shoot.

**Defense Attorney Minasowicz:** Did the defendant run out there with his pistol by himself, or were there SS posts near him?

**Witness:** I did not see any others.

**Defense Attorney Minasowicz:** Were the shots fired from above the pit or from within?

**Witness:** Inside the pit.

**Defense Attorney Minasowicz:** So the witness only heard the gunshots?

**Witness:** Yes, indeed.

**Defense Attorney Ostrowski:** The witness has testified that a Jew was shot during an operation. Did the witness just hear about it, or did he observe it himself?

**Witness:** I saw it with my own eyes.

**Defense Attorney Ostrowski:** When was it?

**Witness:** In October of 1943.

**Defense Attorney Ostrowski:** Did it happen in direct proximity of the witness?

**Witness:** At a distance of 30–40 meters.



**Defense Attorney Rappaport:** The witness has testified that Szczurek and his colleagues sicked a dog on the witness. When and where did that happen?

**Witness:** In 1941 at the *Bauhof*.

**Defense Attorney Rappaport:** Did the witness hear Szczurek sick the dog, or was the defendant merely present for it?

**Witness:** Szczurek was present for it and I saw the dog go back to him later.

**Defense Attorney Rappaport:** But the witness did not hear him sick the dog?

**Witness:** I did not.

**Defense Attorney Rappaport:** Thank you.

**Presiding Judge:** Does defendant Grabner have questions for the witness or a statement?

**Defendant Grabner:** A question. High Tribunal! The witness has stated I ordered every prisoner flogged 25 times with a stick when I arrived at the camp. Please ask the witness when that was and how does the witness know I issued such an order?

**Witness:** It was on 6 July 1940. Who gave the order – I do not know, but Grabner was there.